

SCI Nursing Journal Focuses On Translating Research into Practice

The fall 2004 issue of *SCI Nursing*, the official journal of the American Association of Spinal Cord Injury Nurses, focuses on translating evidence-based research into routine clinical practice. Five articles and guest editorial were authored by members of VA's Spinal Cord Injury Quality Enhancement Research Initiative (SCI QUERI) and discuss practical lessons learned over six years of research about improving care for persons with spinal cord injury/disorders (SCI/D). The introductory article introduces the mission of bringing evidence-based practice into daily activities to provide high-quality, appropriate, timely, and cost-effective care. It also illustrates the complexity of making changes by describing and debunking six commonly held myths, such as the myth that clinicians readily endorse the use of clinical practice guidelines (CPGs), or that provider behavior is easy to change once new evidence is established.

The articles in this journal draw from experiences gained during two large, multi-site projects – both with the goal of moving research evidence into practice within VA health care settings. The first project, conducted at six VA SCI/D centers, sought to improve provider adherence and patient outcomes related to two new CPGs about neurogenic bowel management and thromboembolism. The second project's goal was to improve respiratory vaccine delivery and was eventually implemented by the SCI QUERI investigators at 23 VA SCI/D centers. QUERI has met that goal in doubling the rates of pneumonia and influenza vaccinations for all veterans with spinal cord injury and disease — a high-risk group of patients who are more likely to die from these illnesses than the general public.

The lessons set out in these articles will help health care providers, particularly nurses, enhance patient care, as QUERI investigators continue to work toward helping VA quickly integrate research findings to improve quality care for veterans.

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